

REPORT OF THE INTERIM COMMITTEE ON SALES TAX
FOR PARKS, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

November 30, 1987

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

REPRESENTATIVE JAMES "JAY" RUSSELL, CHAIRMAN
REPRESENTATIVE DOUG BOSCHERT
REPRESENTATIVE GAIL CHATFIELD
REPRESENTATIVE DON DANN
REPRESENTATIVE BILL MCKENNA
REPRESENTATIVE DAVID RAUCH

The Interim Committee on Sales Tax for Parks, Soil and Water Conservation conducted public hearings on November 10, 23, and 24, 1987 in St. Louis, Kansas City, and Jefferson City respectfully. Attendance was excellent and the committee heard testimony from 41 individuals.

The primary issues addressed were: 1) should the state continue using a sales tax to fund state parks, soil and water conservation, 2) should provisions be made to fund local/urban parks, 3) should provisions be made to fund cultural and fine arts activities, and 4) should the present tax be increased to allow for funding of additional programs.

Ninety-three percent (38) of the witnesses supported continuation of the sales tax with accompanying provisions for local/urban parks. Deteriorating facilities, growing demands on existing facilities, fixed budgets, and diminishing federal funds were among the reasons cited by witnesses in support of the local/urban park provisions. Officials and citizens representing urban park programs pledged support for continuation of the current 1/10 of one-percent tax or a slight increase in the tax (e.g., 2/10 - 3/20), providing provisions for local/urban parks are included. Urban representatives did not oppose the use of funds for soil and water conservation. However, they do not believe they should carry the burden of taxation without reaping any benefits.

The Citizens Committee for Soil, Water, and Parks Conservation opposed the idea of a tax increase for local/urban park funding. Reasons cited were: 1) sales tax revenues should be a statewide benefit, 2) sales tax form of revenue raising has been over-used, and 3) soil erosion should be the priority issue. The Citizens Committee also has begun an initiative petition seeking to continue the sales tax in its present form with a 10 year sunset clause. Moreover, the Citizens Committee suggested using their proposition as a back-up should the House fail to agree on its own version.

Testimony regarding provisions for cultural and fine arts funding also received support, citing the advantages of additional funding and the close relationship between many cultural/arts activities and local/urban parks.

Minutes of these hearings and associated materials are available for inspection.